

AGENDA ITEM NO:

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

DOWNS COMMITTEE 24 September 2018

Report of: Service Director, Neighbourhoods and Service Director, Culture

Title: Downs Management and Events report

Ward: N/A

Officers Presenting Report: Melissa Inman, Senior Events Officer
Ben Skuse, Downs Supervisor

Contact Telephone Number: 0117 9037141

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Policy

Not applicable

2. Consultation

a) Internal

John Williams, Area Manager North.
Becky Belfin, Parks Development Officer
Sarah Blazier, Operations Coordinator North
Ben Skuse, Downs Supervisor
Gemma Dando, Service Manager
Melissa Inman, Senior Events Officer

3. Events Report; provided by Melissa Inman.

Music Concert on the Downs 2018

The music concert held on the 1st September on the Downs organised by Team love was well organised with lots of positive coverage in the press. 500 tickets were made available to local residents at a 15% discount, no less than 22,500 tickets were sold. The position of the Main Stage was tweaked from 2016 and moved approximately 50m further away from local residence at both Sea Walls Rd, The Avenue and Julian Road.

There are strict off-site noise levels that Team Love are required to adhere to and, as with previous years, the organisers employ an independent company to monitor the levels. The appointed noise control consultant(s) is required under their premises license to monitor the noise levels throughout the duration of the event at positions as agreed with an authorised officer of Bristol City Council Pollution Control Team.

The organisers provided an alternative event from 7pm to 11pm at St Mary's Church, with complimentary music, food and beverages, to offer some respite and alternative entertainment to local residents.

BCC Arts and Events Team received two complaints from residents one of which was around not being able to bring their own food into the site the other regarding the impact of noise, both of which have been dealt with.

A full de-brief is due to take place with Bristol Safety Advisory Group on the 17th October 2018.

The Tour of Britain

The event was delivered by Sweet Spot and supported by Guy Fishbourne (Contracts Manager, Healthy Lifestyles and Place), Duncan Venison (Network Operations Manager, Traffic and Events Team) at Bristol City Council. The event site was active from 5am to 3pm, with site clear 7pm. The event fell on Tuesday when schools went back. We estimate approximately 4-5 thousand people attended the Downs to watch the start and finish, as well as enjoy the event village.

Parking was directed to Stoke Road. There was an overflow of 30 vehicles. The large lorries located on the grass were for the big screens that were covering the cyclists.

Proposed Schedule of Events 2019

The Site Permissions team and Ben Skuse, ground supervisor for the Downs, will discuss event proposals for the Downs 2019 to review those proposals received via the site permissions team for areas of the Downs including water tower, sea walls, show grounds and parameters of the Downs for walk and run events. Refer to Item 7.

The type of event, impact on local residents and businesses, transport infrastructure, dates and timings, ground protection, were all considered. It was agreed at the event sub group committee that members of the Event Subgroup are open to annual events returning but require that the new event proposals, including that of the Pride festival and the Downs Music Concert (extending their event by one day) present their proposals at a subsequent Event Subgroup meeting.

Circus Tender

The tender document is largely complete and complete tender documents will be circulated to the Event Subgroup committee for review. The tender agreement will be a 3 year contract from October 2019, with option to extend for one year. Proposed fees will start from £33k and build inflation (RPI) into the final contract.

4. Parks Update

4a) Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project Education Programme; provided by Mandy Leivers.

From July to early September we engaged with 798 people through the education programme. We ran three guided walks (Butterflies of the Downs, Bat and moth night and Identifying galls) and a children's holiday event (Brilliant butterflies).

In July, we taught 405 school children and over the school holidays 188 children visited for play scheme sessions. Three schools and two of the playscheme groups visited for the first time as part of the Audience Development Plan project to widen the range of groups visiting the Downs. We were able to cover the transport costs for these groups with a grant from the John James Foundation (the cost of transport is a huge barrier to many groups, especially those from the less well-off areas of the city). We received lovely feedback from

one of our school sessions: "I'm so impressed by the thought and preparation you've put into your sessions - your resources are great. It's been wonderful to see children who don't normally engage in learning in the classroom, totally come alive and fully engage outdoors". (Year 3 teacher, St Nicholas of Tolentine Primary School).

We ran our third session with refugee families as part of the 'Wild Adventures Family Project' (this is the project that we are running in conjunction with Bridges for Communities, the Bristol City Council Inner City and East Bristol Health Improvement Team and Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge, as part of the Audience Development Plan). The focus was on birds and the families took part in a bird trail, identifying species found on the Downs. We then took them over to participate in the Peregrine Watch Weekend, using telescopes and binoculars to catch some good views of the peregrines. We held two 'Downs Challenge' sessions with 16 children from Imayla (a project that supports children facing difficult times). The first of these focused on the peregrine falcons, and had fantastic sightings as the fledglings flew right overhead! The second session challenged the children to find out about spiders and mini-beasts. Experts from the Bristol Naturalists' Society joined us to share their knowledge and enthusiasm. By the end of the session, even the most squeamish children were engaging with the bug hunt and learning about the special purse web spiders that live in the Gorge.

At the beginning of the school holidays the Lord Mayor invited us to run some activities for her 'At Home' event at the Lord Mayor's Mansion. We created a bird trail in the garden and held a wildlife mask making activity to introduce her 29 guests to the wildlife of the Avon Gorge and Downs.

We also attended the Downs Festival at the beginning of September. We took along our display and range of leaflets and talked to festival goers about the wildlife of the Avon Gorge and Downs. Later in September we'll also be running a children's craft activity at the 'Cycle Sunday' event on the Downs.

4b) Management and Resources **Downs Team Report; provided by Ben Skuse.**

July through to August has seen almost permanent drought conditions and unfortunately, the pretty much permanent presence of travellers at the Downs.

Daily duties continue, many people come, much litter has to be cleared. The daily goat monitoring continues. One upside to the drought has been that we have not had to be constantly mowing grass which has freed up time for other activities. A lot of time has been spent clearing up after travellers after they have been moved on from one part of the Downs then pitched up on another!

Into September, the presence of two large scale events at the Downs has dominated proceedings and now that they are through there is significant work involved in getting our Football provision (29 pitches) ready for the 18/19 season. Happily due to favourable ground conditions before, during, and for the breakdown, the ground is in good shape and will quickly begin to right itself from the discoloured patchwork that it resembles directly after Team Love leave the site. Tractor mounted spiking and chaining operations take place followed by rolling to get the area suitable for Football once more. This transformation is a cause for concern each year, but with a good grounds protection plan from Team Love and the knowledge and skills within my team it is a transformation that has been successfully made again. Long may this continue, the marriage of events and football provision at the Downs will always be a challenge.

Final grass mowing will take us from now and into October where the team will once more

pick up the Downs scrub management 10 yr plan. Alongside Football provision twice a week we will work with this document across the Winter months.

Health and Safety

Members may remember from July's meeting that we had a presentation from Avon and Somerset police. They, as I do, sit on a working party looking at ways to decrease incidences of suicide off the Avon Gorge and bridge. This working party met again on Sept 10th and it was agreed to take one section of the areas identified and prioritise one 40m stretch of fence line for improvement first. I will raise this at the next Finance sub-group of this committee on October 31st.

It has been identified after being flagged by my team, that some of the stones in the wall at Sea Walls are becoming loose and causing the railings to have more play in them than should be the case. This is being looked at by a building and property surveyor from Bristol City Council. At time of writing I still await her report. Again any questions around approving spend etc will be put to the committee via the Finance sub group.

The Downs dressing rooms have suffered badly from break ins across the summer months. Repairs have been carried out, new security upgrades and schools being back will hopefully see this anti-social behaviour die down now.

5. Public Sector Equality Duties

5a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following "protected characteristics": age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:

- i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
- ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
 - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
 - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
 - tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding.

6. Legal and Resource Implications

The Clifton and Durdham Downs (Bristol) Act 1861 provides that the Downs should remain as a place for the resort and recreation of the citizens of Bristol, and that a committee should be appointed to manage them. The recommendations of this report are within the powers conferred by this statute.

7. **Land:** The land is under the control of the Downs Committee.

8. **Personnel:** Not applicable

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers: None